

THE CEA CRITIC

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January, 1954

ANNUAL MEETING AT CHICAGO

Whatever we may think of student evaluations, we teachers had better do something about establishing fair evaluation methods or administrators and professional educators will force unfair methods upon us.

This was the warning of Benjamin Lease, Univ. of Ill. at Chicago, speaking to a hundred and twenty CEA stalwarts at the Quadrangle Club, Univ. of Chicago, on Dec. 27. Prof. Lease reported on a joint study of student evaluations he had made with the late Ernest Van Keuren. He quoted Prof. Armstrong's *CEA Critic* (Sept.) article condemning evaluations and remarked that such views are becoming more prevalent in our profession. This trend might lead to tragic results.

In facing the great wave of "hooligans" (the term used by Prof. Armstrong) soon to descend upon us, Prof. Lease hinted, we must regain control of the policy of the secondary schools and of our own colleges, we must improve our teaching and curriculum, and we must regard students as human beings and invite them to express their opinions of our teaching. But objective evaluation methods will not work because they provide no way of distinguishing between wise and foolish answers. Humanistic standards must be applied.

The evaluation method recommended by Prof. Lease involves student essays written in response to the question: how much did the students get out of the course, and how good were the methods used? The essays should be read and summarized by another teacher in the same course, not by the student's own teacher who should see only the summary. The general competence of the writing gives the evaluator a clue to the value of the criticism.

In conclusion, Prof. Lease remarked that students are really on our side. Their apparent anti-intellectualism is only anti-educationism, and once we can break through that we can win their confidence.

Foreign Languages and the English Teacher

Kathrine Koller, Univ. of Rochester, spoke in vigorous defense of the theme of this year's MLA meeting: the importance of the F L program to America. It is one of the tragic paradoxes in our national culture that the United States as a great power is now less able than ever before to communicate with foreign countries. If the English teacher does not do his utmost to correct this situation he may find that he too will become dispensable, and the fault will be his own. The survival of the humanities depends upon the survival of all of its disciplines for it is more than a mere collection of artifacts; it is a living organism.

Prof. Koller reviewed the important part played by foreign languages in the making of the English scholar and stated her conviction that no one really knows his

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The Age of Wasted Miracles

[This paper, by J. R. Cominsky, publisher of the *Saturday Review*, was presented at the Corning CEA Institute.]

Too few people realize that education is America's No. 1 business and No. 1 financial investment. Education is our not-so-secret weapon. In our schools and colleges we try to give people a sense of values, a sense of standards, a sense of idealism, and a sense, in general, of how to live a full and satisfying life.

But the minute the college graduate has hung up his diploma on the wall, he is assailed by a multiplicity of mass media that apparently get their inspiration from that much-quoted statement of H. L. Mencken: "Nobody ever went broke underestimating the taste of the American people." He sees around him men in high places striving desperately to find the lowest common denominator in the hope of cashing it.

Entertainment

A part of the lowest common denominator approach to life is the complete infatuation with and dedication to only one thing in life—entertainment. Everything must be entertainment. Life must be a perpetual vaudeville or burlesque show, or a combination of both. It is never to be assumed that the American people could ever understand or appreciate or enjoy anything above the vaudeville stage level.

And so, when one of America's greatest companies celebrates its fiftieth anniversary and puts \$600,000 into a television show that commands two hours of the time of the two major networks and, therefore, practically assures the complete listening of America—all made possible by the miracle of television—to what use is this great miracle put? Well, it is pretty sad, because the best we can come up with is a pair of popular crooners, a speakeasy ballet, and a couple of musical comedy personalities singing duets. I am not against fun, and, of course, it's fun to hear crooners, but I don't think you have to pay \$600,000 for them and buy up two networks for two hours to do it.

Our True Greatness

It is a national misfortune to me that on such an occasion, with such concentrated listening and viewing, something cannot be done to bring through to the American people the true greatness of America, the richness of their inheritance, and the things in life that really make life worth living, as well as perhaps a few of the people who are making a historic contribution to our time. If I had the two major networks for two hours on a night in America, I would not worry about my Hooper rating or Nielsen rating but would try to show the American people their true greatness and make them proud of their country—and you don't have to be dull and stuffy to do that.

Thank heavens, there are some notable exceptions and I'd like to take this occasion to pay tribute to

them. J. C. Hall, of Hallmark Greeting Cards, has never underestimated the taste of the American people. Mr. Hall has found that the cultural market is a mass market in the U. S. A. and has developed a tremendous business enterprise by catering to the high intelligence and good taste of millions of Americans.

Another notable example is the Aero Willys Motor Company which has sponsored—and is sponsoring—the broadcasts of the New York Philharmonic and which was the first commercial sponsor of "Omni-bus", the great television presentation developed by the Ford Foundation. The latter was—and is—fantastically successful because here again there are many millions of Americans who enjoy being treated at that mental level.

Where We Fail

It is a national weakness that America has never shown to the world on its great occasions the true strength and beauty and idealism of our country. England seems to have a very special gift for that sort of thing. One of the most exciting experiences in my life was viewing "A Queen is Crowned", the color film of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. The feeling I had was that here was a great civilized people at its best saying to the world the things that really mark the civilized man.

But low taste and shallow understanding are not confined to television. The cultural lag of so many of the mass media of all types is one of the most depressing aspects of our time. The newspapers, the radio, TV, practically all forms of mass communication don't even begin remotely to represent the intellectual, cultural and artistic stature of this great country—a country in which more people go to concerts of serious music than to baseball games, and in which in a single month in New York currently the Sadler's Wells Ballet grosses \$485,000 at the box office.

We Publicize Vulgarly

It is my hunch that historians of the future may write off our time as The Age of Wasted Miracles. We use a great miracle like wire-photo to bring to the masses movie-star romances that undermine morality. We too often use the miracle of television to communicate to millions vulgarities that was previously confined to small audiences. And we use the front pages of the multi-million circulation magazines—five at a time simultaneously—to talk about a television performer's new baby. If that is creative publishing and editing for the masses we had better re-study the American people.

Well, what can anybody do about it? If you are just an ordinary man in the street, you might say to your neighbor some time—"Wouldn't it be wonderful if the Boston Symphony played at an inauguration of the President of the United States?" Perhaps he might pass the thought along and it might grow. The Boston Symphony is one of our priceless cultural assets

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THE CORNING INSTITUTE: AN EVALUATION

[The following is a digest prepared by Robert T. Fitzhugh of the address by Harry D. Gidson, President of Brooklyn College, which concluded the Corning Institute.]

It is obvious to anyone who has participated in this discussion here that business and liberal arts people have a joint concern in shared problems, and it is also obvious that we are very far from any answers to questions we are not ready to formulate. But the acre ploughed up at Corning holds promise of rewarding crops if cultivated empirically. CEA should continue pragmatically and draw into its discussions more and more people who have a moral bellyache with the absence of certain factors in our intellectual life. But we must by all means avoid premature formulations and the development of a small group committed to a dogmatic program.

Widespread Support

It is encouraging to note other support for liberal arts education, in strange places, too. For example, the new Air Force ROTC program, recent reports on pre-law and pre-medical training, as well as business leadership, have all recently shown a growing concern to avoid premature specialization. Businessmen in particular are concerned not only with a need for perspective and horizon in those who determine policy, but also with the question, "What is the general climate of ideas in which free enterprise can continue to function effectively?"

This brings them at once to the problem of colleges which are concerned with the future of liberal education, and brings them closer to the classical truths about free society—the society characterized by the presence of responsible choice and the separation of powers. Businessmen who stress the need to decentralize their businesses, and the importance of perspective in their executives, are giving new and practical statement to classical ideas grown barren because they did not seem to Americans to grow out of experience. The day the Corning conference opened, the *New York Times* reported a well-known efficiency engineer's thesis that there was waste in excessive efficiency. This type of thinking brings the industrial manager very close to the concerns the Corning conference is trying to formulate. Business seems to be getting closer to Justice Brandeis' position that the correct measure of a social system is the kind of men it produces.

What Do the Humanities Contribute?

This is music to the ears of the humanist, but before he jumps to pleasant conclusions, he must ask, "What light do present humanities and social science programs throw on such problems as urban migration, Puerto Ricans in Chicago or New York, race problems? What light do the humanities, not as they

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English Association.

Essay Contest

The judges for the College English Association's Essay Contest for non-English majors report their decision as follows: First prize, Brother Aquin Bousquet, C. F. X., Catholic University of America; Second prize, Arthur K. House, Purdue University, Paul Krassner, The City College, New York, N. Y.; Third prize, A. Richard Bernstein, University of Miami, Amelia Young, College of Notre Dame of Maryland.

Because of the closeness of the decisions, the judges recommend that the prize money be divided—\$50 for first prize, \$20 each for the second prize winners, and \$5 each for the third prize winners.

Response was light. This fact prompts several questions. 1) Are non-English majors in general so well satisfied with their work in English that they have no suggestions to make about it? 2) Have these students so little interest in English studies that they are indifferent to a serious request for thoughtful suggestions? 3) Did English departments, through whom the contest was publicized, encourage responses?

ROBERT T. FITZHUGH, Chairman

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SCRIBNER'S

Wasted Miracles

(Continued from Page 1, Col. 3) and the man who says, "Well, who would listen to it?" might be reminded that on a recent tour the orchestra turned away hundreds of persons in every city in which it played; it could not begin to meet the public demand.

If you have anything to do with a radio or television program you might occasionally suggest that we show the world some of our intellectual, cultural and artistic possessions—both past and present—on appropriate occasions—as something we are proud of. If you have anything to do with publishing of newspapers, magazines or books you might occasionally recognize the fact that publications generally have become shallow and insipid in the most complicated and controversial age in human history and might begin to deal more realistically and more dramatically with some things which may determine the fate of our civilization.

Public Unprepared

All this has come to me with dramatic force in the last year or so because I happen to be involved in an important fund-raising campaign for the University of Rochester which stands for values, standards, and ideals in which I believe. It is not easy to raise such money because the public has not been prepared by the mass media for the subsidizing of values that have not yet been presented to them with adequate respect or understanding or appreciation. This is the crux of the whole money-raising situation in America in the field of education.

As an aside, it is shocking to see how under-staffed and inadequate the leading press associations of America are in dealing with the field of education or in reporting important news from intellectual, artistic or cultural areas or the news of institutions serving these areas. It is pathetically thin and inadequate coverage and that's why many many millions of Americans are not learning the one big fact—that this is the most cultured country in the history of the world. That fact apparently is off the record.

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I've Been Reading

Too Loud a Fanfare

James Joyce's *Ulysses*, A Study by Stuart Gilbert (2d ed.; Alfred A. Knopf, \$5.00).—The author himself calls the present edition "a new, revised and slightly enlarged edition" (p. 9), but the jacket calls it "a complete revision, rewritten and reset, of the famous book written under Joyce's supervision." I have collated only about 100 pages of it, against the 1934 printing, but I don't find the revising and re-writing very significant. If the present work represents "complete revision," one wonders whether a photographic reproduction might not have sufficed.

A few errors have been corrected. The footnotes have been brought a little more up to date. The tyro will no longer need to be confused over the relation between *Work in Progress* and *Finnegans Wake*, and the more advanced reader will likely welcome some new

In this off-the-record fact, however, lies a paradox that offers encouragement for the future.

This paradox is that the American people are not only finding out about culture, but developing a healthy and growing taste for the best, and this despite the apparent effort of much of our great mass media to keep culture a secret.

This widespread taste, accompanied by an unprecedented public access to the lively arts of literature, music, and painting, is a tribute to the soundness of our system of public and higher education. It is also a tribute to the responsiveness of the public to the best whenever it is made available to them or they can find it by themselves.

My feeling is that we should not keep this fact of America's cultural vitality a secret but should put it on the record and then act upon it. This will infuse new vigor not only into our support of education in this country, but into the public's understanding of our cultural wealth and of their right to expect our mass media and those who underwrite such media to share some of our cultural wealth with them.

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640 pages. 5 x 7 1/2. March 1953

Prentice-Hall

70 FIFTH AVENUE
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"sources," analogues, and identifications here first offered.

Yet Gilbert has not really rewritten his book as, say, an American scholar would have had to do it—in the light of the present state of Joyce studies and criticism. I find no mention in the book of Bernard Fehr, Herbert Gorman, Richard M. Kain, Harry Levin, Joseph Prescott, W. Y. Tindall, or Edmund Wilson. If Gilbert has changed his mind about Joyce or *Ulysses* in any important respect in the past twenty years, the new edition of his work hardly shows it.

WILLIAM PEERY
University of Texas

Max Goldberg spent Dec. 28 at the American Business Writing Association meeting in Cincinnati reporting on the Corning Institute. In his talk he stressed the humanistic aspects of CEA industry-liberal arts exchange.

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An Evaluation

(Continued from Page 1, Col. 4) should be taught but as they are taught, throw upon the clarification of human value judgments? Just exactly where do present-day humanistic courses sharpen perception, discipline emotion, help to clarify and balance? Do we really develop character traits? How? Where? Or do we just, in a naive way, assume we do, as an unplanned product of activities designed to achieve something else?

As I observe English departments, I am not impressed with the extent to which this emphasis on disciplined imagination, disciplined emotion, has brought fruitful returns to those who are supposed to be teaching the undergraduates. The problem is human, and it calls for putting the nature of man, again, right in the center of our teaching and our study, including moral sources of responsibility such as religion, and this in a society which has committed itself to secularism in its public education. Our unquestioning acceptance of the pursuit of economic productivity as the highest priority in public policy constitutes a disturbing similarity between us and present-day Russia.

Before we start preaching too loudly about industry, however, we should see just how much of this modern economism, this spirit of "can you measure it?" has actually become dominant in the humanist citadel itself. Socrates defined the basic sin as the unexamined life. If this is true, those at the Corning

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conference are present at the birth of some basic virtues, the examination of some long unexamined aspects of American economic and social achievement. But if we humanists are to interest business management, we must be very sure of the clarity and the integrity of our position. Let us be certain we do not express values that we do not ourselves live by.

A United Approach

It would also be an error to link humanistic objectives exclusively to private educational institutions. There is no evidence that these objectives are more effectively or more frequently pursued by private than by public colleges. Concern to develop humanistic studies is a matter for a united approach, and not for invidious distinction between private and public institutions. A quality product in education as in business is costly to make, and public education is a little more than one half the American problem. It is an error in strategy to present a common problem in securing support as if it were primarily an argument to finance private higher education. The problem is to preserve and to strengthen a free society, a society capable of responsible moral choice. Or in other words, the problem is how education can make men and women more fit for the responsibilities of free society.

Only after we have made our position clear, and agreed on it, can we discuss budgetary responsibilities for it with industry. We have a problem of public relations here, in the largest sense of the term.

The New Conservatism

We are not concerned with turning out smoothly polished spare parts for the industrial machine. We are concerned with raising the basic question of the kind of men it takes to carry on and to preserve a free society. In a sense, this may be the renaissance of a new conservatism. (President Chalmers prefers to call it "enduring individualism".) This is not conservatism in the sense that it is concerned with preserving the status quo. God forbid. It is conservatism that is concerned with preserving

the conditions in which a free society can continue to endure.

Wider Representation

In this connection, there are some people absent from Corning who could well have been present. There is a larger area of agreement than merely between those in industry and those in the colleges who are mindful of the new emphasis on the nature of man. A broad group of the American Trade Union movement is beginning to have similar concerns. Two names are characteristic—Dubinsky and Reuther. Dubinsky's brain trust, Will Herberg, as a member of Dubinsky's staff, was encouraged to write *Judaism and the Modern World* because the ILGWU was concerned at the moral vacuum among garment workers created when Marxism went out as an appealing secular religion.

But may we all remember that in this new Socratic examination of unexamined phases of our industrial and academic life, the questioners are very much in the minority, both in the colleges and in business. There is a big job left to carry the questions to other groups, and perhaps the first responsibility is to formulate carefully for ourselves just what the questions are which we want to ask the other groups.

Avoid Self-satisfaction

Let us not forget the danger that those who saw the problem earlier will develop into a little community rich in mutual admiration for its own deep insight and wisdom. I therefore close with a very Christian prayer which a Protestant bishop pronounced some years ago at a convention of clergy in Canada which had been unresponsive to the bishop's efforts to put the discussion beyond the vested interests of the participants. When the bishop was asked to offer the final prayer, he said, "May we justify the esteem in which we hold ourselves."

Budgetary Problems

In reply to a question, President Gideons added: We are running now on what is left of the humanist liberal education of the past, on money put in the bank twenty or thirty years ago, on trained manpower that committed itself and

would not always make the same commitment today. If, to maintain humanistic studies, the colleges must currently appoint inadequate manpower (in terms of devotion, dedication, scholarship), this group will achieve tenure to the age of 65 or 70, and will further discourage young people of the desirable sort from entering the profession. That will be a difficult trend to reverse. Those who want to encourage a healthier selection in the humanities all know that, in addition, the fellowships are now all on the side of the physical sciences. Basically, these are budgetary problems, and serious ones.

Vested Interests

But another problem is not budgetary, and it can be attacked within the profession. It is deeply rooted in the vested interests of the graduate schools. We can organize ourselves to expose the extent to which high-falutin' language about research is nothing but a camouflage for vulgar self-interest of academic hogs on ice. We must recognize that graduate school policies have a determining influence on the selection of the next generation of teachers. A properly motivated youngster may overcome a good many financial burdens. But combine financial disadvantages with a training process that sifts out and eliminates students with natural aptitude in our direction, and we are close to a situation that will make for barren ground twenty years hence. I think that it is the present situation in humanistic scholarship in many of our leading centers of graduate study.

Recommendations

President Gideons suggested that CEA establish two or three committees to make sharp and vigorous proposals formulated with the purpose of provoking discussion rather than with the objective of securing consent. Let their reports be widely circulated, and let future meetings be arranged to discuss them. It would be well to get some spokesmen whom graduate schools will listen to.

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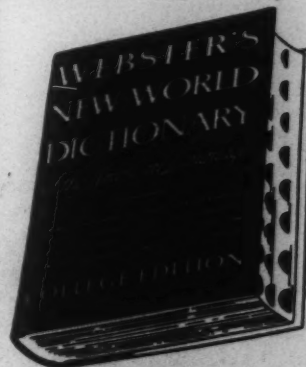
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Annual Meeting

(Continued from Page 1, Col. 1) own language until he knows several others. She quoted Elmer E. Schattschneider's statement at the Corning Institute (see *Sat. Rev.* for Nov. 21) of the need for interdisciplinary cooperation and urged English teachers to work with comparative literature and foreign language specialists.

Science and the English Teacher

W. L. Werner, Penn. State, CEA national president, reviewed the history of the relationship between English scholars and science and developed a creed for the future. Our first strategy, under the impact of the success of the natural sciences, was to pretend that we too were scientific. Of recent years, however, we have shifted our ground; we now emulate the social sciences in our claims and orientation.

This is a betrayal of the essential genius of the humanistic tradition. It leads us into a deterministic point of view and to the neglect of both philosophy and religion, as well as of many human traits such as ambition, love, curiosity, temperance, honor, selfmastery, which the social sciences cannot understand and which are becoming more and more unintelligible to the rising generation.

We must not remain aloof, however. It is the duty of the modern English teacher to enter the arena with the social sciences, to study them, to know their shortcomings, and to stand beside them as an interpreter of life. We must study the social sciences if we are to know what our students think of the nature of man; they show us what our point of departure must be. The world of literature is full of analogies to the world of science, and if we begin with these we can capture the imagination of the modern youth and lead him to a comprehension of those phases of life which only the humanities include. CEA Institutes

The annual meeting was brought to a close by a forceful statement from Max Goldberg, Univ. of Mass., CEA Executive Sec., concerning the Corning Institute and future institutes.

Chicago Round Table & CEA Institute at Corning

George E. Probst, Director, announces that the University of Chicago Round Table radio discussion for January 24 will draw on Corning CEA Institute speakers and on the *Saturday Review* report of the Corning sessions.

Panelists will be: Gilbert W. Chapman, President, Yale & Towne Manufacturing Company; Louis M. Lyons, Curator, Nieman Foundation for the Advancement of Journalism, Harvard University; and Albert L. Nickerson, Vice-President and Director in Charge of Foreign Trade, Socony-Vacuum Oil Company, Inc. Henry W. Sams and Maxwell H. Goldberg have cooperated with Director Probst.

The broadcast will treat urgent problems related to "Industry and the Liberal Arts." It will originate from Radio City, New York, at 1:30 p. m. to 2:00 p. m., Eastern Standard Time.

The program is broadcast by 94 NBC stations live across the country, rebroadcast by 55 educational radio stations within the following ten days and presented in New York City on Thursday, January 28th, over WNYC at 8:30 p. m.

1954 CEA Institute

Following a Chicago conference in which Russel Nye (English department head at Michigan State) Clyde Henson (chairman of the local committee) and Max Goldberg took part, it can be announced that steady progress is being made in preparations for the 1954 CEA Institute at the Michigan State College, East Lansing. The conference will be held at the famous Kellogg Center. Originally set for June 24-25, the sessions have been expanded to include several on June 23 of special concern to college teachers of English and other liberal arts. Assurance has been given that, for academic participants, the costs will be kept to a maximum of \$20.00 for June 24 and 25. Fees for the additional day are now being estimated. Those planning to attend should make arrangements as soon as possible. Interest is very lively.

The Corning Institute showed that we must put our own house in order and understand ourselves and our relations with others. Especially, we must come to terms with the social sciences and with other branches of the humanities. Our major task is to look outward, to make our point of view understood by the leaders of American industry and to listen to and understand

Michigan State College

Among those who have already agreed to participate are: Presidents Hannah (Michigan State), Hilberry (Wayne), and Hatcher (Univ. of Michigan); and Dr. Wilson Compton, President, Council for Financial Aid to Education.

Dean Milton Muelder (Arts and Sciences, Michigan State) has endorsed the Institute and is fully cooperating. Prof. Nye is strongly backing the Institute. Clyde Henson has been given as much released time as is needed for his heavy Institute duties.

Solid progress has been made. Ample cooperation of high quality has been assured. The prospects are bright for an exceptionally effective Institute at East Lansing next June.

January Supplement

With this issue of the *Critic* a reprint of the 16-page section of the Nov. *Saturday Review* devoted to the Corning Institute is going to our readers. Together with President Gideonse's and J. R. Cominsky's speeches printed in this issue, this provides some of the major material from that Institute.

their special problems. Progress was made along all these lines at Corning, and the future should see valuable further developments.

1954 Dues Increase

During 1953 your secretary and your treasurer discussed with a large number of CEA leaders and other CEA members the proposal to raise the annual membership fees from \$2.50 to \$3.50 (\$1.50 dues; \$2.00 *Critic* subscription). The results of this discussion and of day-to-day experience at the national CEA office went, finally, into a detailed memorandum proposing the revised fees and submitted to all national CEA officers and directors. Since the response has been strongly favorable, the 1954 dues letter announces the new rates and summarizes the circumstances calling for them. The national CEA staff trusts that the membership-at-large will be as favorably disposed to the change as are the officers and directors who have responded—and almost all have responded.

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